Sterlings from Gelre (Gelderland)*

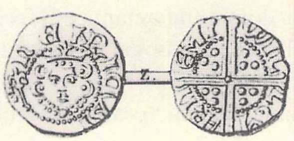
JOS BENDERS

ENGLISH sterlings were first copied in Westphalia and the Rhineland at some point between 1205 and 1220, but according to current knowledge it was not until the 1270s that they became a popular model for the coinage of rulers in the Low Countries.[1] The trend was followed in the county of Gelre, located between Brabant and the Rhineland. The sterling was the first denomination larger than the local deniers which were normally valued at one third of a sterling (throughout this article, I use 'denier' for this smaller denomination). All Gelrian sterlings should probably be attributed to Count Reinald I who succeeded his father Otto II in 1271. Officially, Reinald's rule ended with his death in 1326, although his son Reinald had already taken over *de facto* government in 1318 under the pretence that his father suffered from insanity.[2]

By 1280 sterlings had become an important means of payment in Gelre and the northern Netherlands, as several surviving documents testify (see below). The Gelrian sterlings are of four different types, which are dealt with here in their suggested chronological sequence. Unfortunately, with the exception of type II, Gelrian sterlings are so rare that no statistically significant conclusions can be drawn from these data.

TYPE I (TO 1279): LONG-CROSS STERLING

The first type is an imitation of the class V long-cross sterling of the English king, Henry III (1216–72). The long-cross sterling was introduced in 1247, but it was only after the introduction of class IV in 1250 that the king bore a sceptre. The much commoner class V was minted from 1251 until 1276.[3]



Obv. HENRICVS[REXIII]
Rev. WIL-LEM-ARN-EMI
van der Chijs XXVIII, 2[4]

* I have used the name 'Gelre' in place of the anachronistic 'Gelderland'.

[1] Lord Stewartby, 'German imitations of English short-cross sterlings', *NC* 1995, pp. 210–60 at p. 218.

[2] P. Moors, '"Frenetieke activiteit?" De religieus-ideologische politiek van graaf Reinoud I van Gelre, 1288–1318', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen Vereniging Gelre* 91 (2000), 37–77.

[3] J.J. North, *English Hammered Coinage; Volume I Early Anglo-Saxon to Henry III c.600–1272* (London, 1994), p. 226.

[4] H. Dannenberg, 'Der Sterling-Fund von Ribnitz', *ZfN* 15 (1887), pp. 302–24 at p. 317 describes a coin with the obverse legend ID*DII... REXIII and reverse legend [...]ARN-EML. As I have not been able to trace this coin, I refrained from including it.

The Gelrian version bears the name of the English king, and is only identifiable as being from Gelre because of the reverse legend WILLEM ARNEMI. ARNEMI is presumably Arnhem, whereas WILLEM, although it appears to stand for the moneyer's name was probably just copied from the original.[5] Class V sterlings of a moneyer Willem exist from many mints including Canterbury, Hereford, London, Northampton, Oxford, Wallingford, Wilton and Winchester. These coins were minted in vast quantities and are still quite common.[6]

The alternative explanation for the legend is that Willem was indeed a Gelrian moneyer. This is less likely because a Godefridus *monetarius,* and his colleague Genekinus, are repeatedly mentioned in thirteenth century documents, the first time being in 1254.[7] Godefridus and his family were prominent burgers of the Gelrian capital Arnhem: he and at least two of his descendants occur regularly among the city's *scabini*. This suggests that Godefridus was a moneyer before and/or around 1254, and that he and his family became known by his one-time profession. As coins were not struck on a continuous basis, moneyers either had to move around or take on different jobs. The Willem sterling may mean that by the 1270s Godefridus had found himself a more durable source of income. Nevertheless, the name *monetarius* or later *Munter* became the family name and has been mentioned repeatedly in the second half of the thirteenth century.[8] As no Willem is mentioned as moneyer at Arnhem it appears more plausible that Godefridus, or one of his successors, simply copied the name Willem from the English original.

Given that the original type with sceptre was introduced in 1250, the Gelrian version could have been struck under count Otto II. This is less likely in the light of a treaty dated 28 August 1279, between the archbishop of Cologne, Siegfried of Westerberg (1275–97), the duke of Brabant and the counts of Gelre and Cleves. Under the terms of the treaty the latter both agreed not to mint foreign coins for the next three years 'seu quicunque monetam falsaverit, vel in loco non debito vel sub signo alterius domini monetam cudi fecerit aut permiserit',[9] which suggests that both counts had been copying types of Brabant and/or Cologne. Since the other Gelrian sterlings imitate types introduced after 1279, the long-cross sterling is the only candidate which can be meant in this treaty.[10] This argu-

[5] P.O. van der Chijs, *De munten van de voormalige graven en hertogen van Gelderland van de vroegste tijden tot aan de pacificatie van Gend* (Haarlem, 1852), p. 265.

[6] N.J. Mayhew, 'From regional to central minting, 1158–1464' in: C.E. Challis (ed.), *A New History of the Royal Mint* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 83–178, at pp. 107–14.

[7] L.A.J.W. Sloet, *Oorkondenboek der graafschappen Gelre en Zutfen tot op den slag van Woeringen, 5 juni 1288* (The Hague, 1872), document 761.

[8] C.L. Verkerk, *Coulissen van de macht; Een sociaal-institutionele studie betreffende de samenstelling van het bestuur van Arnhem in de middeleeuwen en een bijdrage tot de studie van stedelijke elitevorming* (Hilversum, 1992).

[9] Sloet, *Oorkonden*, document 1006.

[10] It is not evident which, if any, Cleves sterlings were meant in the 1279 treaty. Several types listed in A. Noss, *Die Münzen der Grafen und Herzoge von Kleve* (Munich, 1931), appear possible. Noss (p. 40) pointed to the possibility that the treaty was primarily meant to stop the hiding of forgers

ment is further supported by the Haarlo find of 1980, which contained two specimens of type I Gelrian sterlings weighing 1.25 grams and 1.27 grams.[11] The presence of a class IIIg Edwardian sterling suggests a burial date of 1280 or slightly later.[12]

At least one Gelrian long cross sterling was in the Ribnitz I hoard of 1887.[13] The presence of coins of Simon I of Lippe (1275–1344), the bishop of Münster, Everhard of Diest (1275–1301) and the archbishop of Cologne, Siegfried of Westerburg (1275–97) indicates that this hoard was deposited in or after 1275.

At least four examples of type I sterling exist: one in the Haagendrup hoard of 1849,[14] one in Ribnitz I and two in Haarlo. The available illustrations do not permit die analysis though the two Haarlo coins were from different dies. The scarcity of this type suggests that the issue was small.[15] These long-cross sterling imitations were probably meant primarily for domestic use and for trading with Germany, where the type circulated widely. Relatively few continental imitations and not a single Gelrian one have been found in the British Isles.[16] Cook estimates the proportion of short- and long-cross sterlings at '1% or less'.[17]

Nevertheless, the proportion of long-cross was sufficient to trouble the authorities.

TYPE II (1282 AND LATER): EDWARDIAN STERLING

On 20 June 1282 Rudolf of Habsburg, as King of the Romans, granted Reinald I the right to mint sterlings at Arnhem stipulating that they had to be 'sub legali numismate', i.e. of legal value.[18] Reinald may have sought such official permission after the 1279 treaty, and it was granted just before the end of the three-year term laid down in the treaty.

instead of the minting of coins by Gelre and Cleves ('Si quis vero dominus terre, nobilis vel alius aliquis, spoliatores vel captivatores sive falsarios monetarum receperit et receptos defenderit, quominus ipsi restituant spoliata, vel solutos dimiserint captivos'; Sloet, *Oorkonden*, document 1006). Cleves has been suggested as the domain of forgers, but the coins in question date from several decades earlier and may also originate from Frisia (H.W. Jacobi, 'Leeuwarden 1983', *JMP* 71 (1984), pp. 135–40).

[11] Schulman (Amsterdam) Auction 276 (22 February 1983) lots 540–1. For a summary of the Haarlo hoard, see J.J. North, 'Some imitations and forgeries of the English and Irish long cross pence of Henry III', *BNJ* 65 (1995), 83–119 at p. 109.

[12] N.J. Mayhew, *Sterling Imitations of the Edwardian Type* (London, 1983), p. 16.

[13] Dannenberg, 'Der Sterling', pp. 302–24. Also see note 4.

[14] C.J. Thomsen, 'Foreign sterlings of the type of the pennies of Henry III', *NC* 1851, 67–9; cf. North, 'Imitations and forgeries', p. 108.

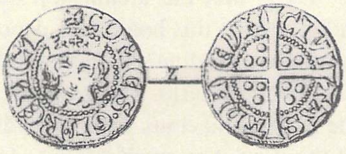
[15] Reportedly, there was a single find of a false specimen in copper (NUMIS 96–1878) which suggests that the Gelrian sterling was attractive enough to serve as an example for forgers. Given that legends on long-cross sterlings and their imitations appear in a seemingly endless variation, and that there is unfortunately no picture of this coin available and I do not know its whereabouts, I doubt the accuracy of this identification.

[16] North, 'Imitations and forgeries', p. 107.

[17] B. Cook, 'Foreign coins in medieval England', in: L.Travaini, ed., *Local Coins, Foreign Coins: Italy and Europe 11th–15th Centuries* (Milan, 1999), pp. 231–84, at pp. 241–55.

[18] Sloet, *Oorkonden*, document 1056.

Type II is an imitation of the new English sterling introduced in 1279 by Edward I. In his study of the continental imitations of the Edwardian sterling Mayhew included detailed information on 37 specimens of the Gelrian type. All were struck at Arnhem, as evidenced by the legends CIV ITA SAR NEYM, CIV ITA SAR NEM and ARE NhE MC IVI. The 37 specimens were struck from 12 obverse and 27 reverse dies.



Obv. COMES.GL.RENCIS
Rev. CIVI-TAS-ARN-EYM
van der Chijs XXVIII,1

Unlike many other continental imitations the bust is crowned, which suggests that Gelre was among the first to copy the Edwardian coin. The original was produced in vast quantities[19] and presumably was circulating widely in Gelre by the time of the royal permission of 1282.[20] It was thus an obvious coin to imitate.

The Edwardian sterling of Gelre was probably meant primarily for trading with England. This can be demonstrated by analysing the locations where these coins have been found. Of the 384 hoards with Edwardian sterlings listed by Mayhew, 14 contained Gelrian sterling imitations and 11 of these hoards were found in Britain.[21] The other three are the Diest hoard, a find in Carnaskeagh (Ireland) and the Ribnitz II hoard of 1887. In addition, the coin has never been found in the Dutch hoards reported in the *JMP* and as of January 2001, there was no record of it in the NUMIS registration system of single finds in the Netherlands. As most of these coins have been found in the British Isles, it comes as no surprise that the British Museum in London has a larger collection of the Gelrian sterlings than any other museum. All these findings support the thesis that the imitative Edwardian sterlings were meant for trade with England. The English government maintained a strict monetary policy to prevent debasement. This was apparently effective as the Gelrian imitations are on the whole of good weight and silver content. The analysis by Mayhew of the weights and silver content of the nine specimens in the British Museum showed an average weight of 1.30 grams (range 1.08 to 1.39 grams; second lowest weight 1.21 grams) and an average fineness of

[19] Mayhew, 'From regional to central minting', pp. 128–37.

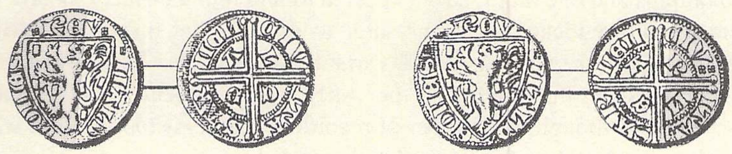
[20] For T.M. Roest, *Essai de classification des monnaies du Comté puis Duché de Gueldre* (Brussels, 1893), the crown was reason to date these Edwardian sterlings in the period 1317–26 (pp. 10–18). In 1317, Reinald had been elevated to *princeps* of the Roman Empire. This was a personal, non-transferable title, and included the privilege to show the ruler's portrait on coins. A number of these crowned sterlings were found in the Diest hoard which was buried in or shortly after 1285 (A. Haeck, *Middeleeuwse muntschatten gevonden in België (750–1483)* (Brussels, 1996), at pp. 124–6).

[21] Mayhew, *Sterling Imitations*, pp. 157–94.

91% silver (range 77–95%; second lowest content 89%).[22] The average weight of 45 specimens, including those listed by Mayhew, is 1.32 grams with a standard deviation of 0.10 gram.

One type of denier (Van der Chijs I–1) has a similar design to the Edwardian sterling, as does a similar piece (Roest 41). The first denier bears the letters AREN on the reverse, as was the case with the deniers which appear to belong to the series of the Gelrian *brabantinus* (type III). This similarity suggests that both deniers were either contemporary or that one succeeded the other within a short period. In the first case it is puzzling why a Brabantine denier would not have sufficed as the deniers were probably only meant for domestic use, so that it appears more plausible that one of these issues preceeded the other. The second type of denier bears no letters at all, and may be the later one. It is not certain whether this denier is from Gelre, Roest attributed it 'with all reservations' to Reinald I because all the specimens known to him had been found in the environs of Arnhem.[23]

TYPE III (1282 AND LATER): BRABANTINUS



Obv. *REV*-*IIALD*-*COMES*
Rev. CIV(:)-ITA(:)-SAR-IIEII. Within cross, LΩΩE (de Voogt 4); within cross, ARNE (de Voogt 5)

I have used the ΩΩ symbols because the lettering is not as clear on the coins as it is on the drawings. Type III imitates sterlings from Brabant, the so-called *brabantini*. In a 1983 publication by Ghyssens[24] the *brabantinus* is said to have been introduced in 1277.[25] He referred to documentary evidence dated June 1277

[22] Mayhew, *Sterling Imitations*, pp. 74–5.

[23] Roest, *Essai*, p. 18.

[24] J. Ghyssens, *Essai de classement chronologique des monnaies brabançonnes depuis Godefroid 1er (1096–1140) jusqu'à la duchesse Jeanne (1255–1406)* (Brussels, 1983).

[25] The Brussels mint may have been the first to mint it in 1280. On the basis of evidence from the Vieuxville (17th century), Alken (1969) and Grand Halleux (1846) hoards Mayhew argues that Louvain and Dalhem followed around 1282–3 and Maastricht around 1284 (*Sterling Imitations*, pp. 13–14). The last two hoards, however, contained imitation *brabantini* struck for Limburg. These were initially attributed to Walram of Limburg but are now believed to have been produced for either Walram of Ligny (1284–6) (J. Elsen, 'L'atelier de Rolduc à la fin du 13e siècle', *Liste* 160 (1994), pp. 3–15) or Walram of Valkenburg (1287–8). The first appears most probable and consequently, in his survey of Belgian finds Haeck (*Middeleeuwse muntschatten*, pp. 24–5) gives a deposit date of 1285 for the Alken and Grand Halleux hoards. Unfortunately, this means that Mayhew's chronology is no longer tenable.

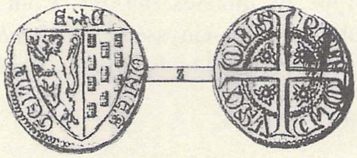
which explicitly mentions 'small' coins. This implies that larger coins were struck at the time, which Ghyssens thought were *brabantini*. Mayhew keeps on safe ground by suggesting 'mid-1270s' for the introduction of the *brabantini*.[26]

Initially these *brabantini* bore the names of the moneyers (WALT and IOHN), but probably after 1280 their names were replaced by letters indicating where the mints were located as is the case on the Gelrian coins. It would have taken some time before they were attractive enough to use as examples to copy so one can exclude the possibility that this type was the one referred to in the 1279 treaty. The absence of Gelrian *brabantini* in the Haarlo hoard, together with the presence of two (even scarcer) type I sterlings also points to an introduction after 1280.

The Gelrian imitations were all struck at Arnhem as the reverse legends reads CIV ITA SAR NEN. Some sterlings have the letters ARNE for Arnhem in the inner circle on the reverse, other ones bear what looks like LΩΩE. These garbled letters have been explained as an imitation of DALE (also read as DALC on the Dalhem sterling).[27] This view is generally taken for granted, but Mayhew has suggested reading CLAE.[28] If he is right, this may refer to a moneyer called Claes.[29] The CLAE-variant would then have been the cause of the Brabantian discontent which is reflected in the treaty of 1279. This would have been a very early imitation of the *brabantinus* and one might have expected to find it in the Haarlo hoard. In the absence of solid evidence, it seems safer to assume that the LΩΩE-variant is roughly contemporary with the ARNE-variant. The weights of the few surviving specimens suggest the contrary: the ARNE-coins appear lighter than the LΩΩE-specimens though the number of recorded weights is too small to warrant any conclusion other than that more data is needed.

The existence of deniers (De Voogt 6 and 7) in the same style at these sterlings, which were also struck at Arnhem, testifies to the need for smaller coins as well.

TYPE IV (AFTER 1288): SHIELD STERLING



Obv. E*C-OMES-GELR
Rev. REN-OLD-VSC-OMS
van der Chijs I, 2

[26] Mayhew, *Sterling Imitations*, p. 15, n. 54.

[27] W.J. de Voogt, *Bijdragen tot de numismatiek van Gelderland* (Arnhem, 1867), p. 78; Roest, *Essai*, p. 18.

[28] Mayhew, *Sterling Imitations,* p. 20.

[29] J.J. Grolle, *De muntslag van de graven van Holland tot de Bourgondische unificatie van 1434* (Amsterdam, 2000), mentions 'Claes de monter' in 1282 at Dordrecht, at the time the main city of Holland. Might he have minted for the count of Gelre? As an associate of the count of Holland, the arch rival of the counts of Gelre, this does not appear likely.

Type IV imitates a shield sterling which symbolises an alliance of Brabant and Looz ('Loon' in Dutch). The Stadthistorisches Museum in Cologne has a somewhat damaged die of this type.[30]

Count Arnold V of Looz (1279–1323) was a close political ally of duke John I of Brabant (1268–94). Arnold played an important role in the battle of Woeringen on 5 June 1288. There are no surviving documents about their joint (or convention) issues which feature the Brabantian lion and the Looz coat-of-arms though Baerten has combined data from several sources to date these coins.[31] Border conflicts between both states ended in 1285–6, and the joint issue was struck between the start of the alliance in 1288 and 1294. In 1294 John II succeeded his father as duke of Brabant and a new sterling was introduced in Brabant. References to 'solidis novorum sterlingorum vel denariorum ducis' and 'unus novus denarius ducis' in a Gelrian account of 1294 suggest that this coin had spread quickly and was more important than the Gelrian coinage.[32] The scarcity of Gelrian sterlings underlines this.

It appears ironic that Gelre chose to imitate a coin which symbolised the cooperation between Brabant and Looz. These states were victors at the battle of Woeringen in 1288, where the alliance of which Gelre was part was defeated. Count Reinald was captured and imprisoned. Perhaps the Brabant-Looz sterling was enforced as a symbolic gesture by Brabant and/or made possible when Reinald was still held in captivity or stayed in France under supervision of his relative, the French king Philip IV. As Reinald returned to Gelre around 1290,[33] the issue would have been early in the suggested period of 1288–94.

In contrast to the other sterlings type IV does not mention the mint. Arnhem appears plausible but one cannot exclude Roermond. In a document dated 31 July 1290, Rudolf of Habsburg granted Reinald the right to move the mint either to Harderwijk or Roermond.[34] As the convention sterlings of Brabant-Looz are a southern type, it is possible that they were struck in the southern city of Roermond. Roest mentioned this possibility, but thought it improbable.[35] If Roest is wrong August 1290 is the earliest date for its introduction. This contradicts the argument outlined in the above paragraph.

THE PERIOD 1299–1333

On 20 October 1299 the new King of the Romans, Albert of Austria (1298–1308), allowed Reinaud to strike 'sterlingi denarii' of legal kind at Arnhem. His predecessor Adolf of Nassau (1292–8) had done the same: 'Adulfus Romanorum

[30] P. Joseph, 'Die Münzstempel und Punzen in dem historischen Museum der Stadt Köln', *NZ* 20 (1888), pp. 91–166 at pp. 145–6.

[31] J. Baerten, *De munten van de graven van Loon; 12de–14de eeuw* (Sint Truiden, 1981), pp. 24–6.

[32] L.S. Meihuizen, *De rekening betreffende het graafschap Gelre 1294/1295* (Groningen/Djakarta, 1953), p. 172.

[33] Moors, 'Frenetieke activeit', p. 43.

[34] Van der Chijs, *Gelderland*, p. 264.

Rex per suas literas hujusmodi gratiam monetae conformavit similiter et translationem ejusdem'.[36] These grants were probably meant as confirmations of an existing situation by the newly elected king. As no Gelrian coins are known that can be attributed to the post-1299 period, this right was probably not exercised. Gelrian coins were not struck again until a mint was opened at Nijmegen in the 1330s. The main reason for this inactivity lies in an effective decree issued in England in 1299, stating that foreign sterlings were to be valued as half sterlings, as Berghaus has pointed out.[37]

The absence of Gelrian coinage at this time meant that foreign currency had to be relied upon completely. Documents from this period frequently refer to *brabantini*, which were probably new issues of Brabant. For instance, Linssen refers to the payment of tolls along the river Maas in 1308 in 'brab'.[38] Surviving municipal documents from Arnhem frequently mention *brabantini*, together with 'small denarii' and 'Tourse groten'.[39]

CONCLUSION

The combination of data from surviving specimens, hoards, and documents has made it possible to establish a chronology of the Gelrian sterlings. A warning, however, is necessary. A good deal remains uncertain and future finds and complementary data from other sources, for instance metal analyses and undiscovered documents, may render parts of my reconstruction untenable.

Acknowledgements: I am indebted to Paul Beliën, Jan Grolle, Peter Ilisch, Paul Moors, Bouke-Jan van der Veen, Arie van Herwijnen, Ronald Wientjes, an anonymous reviewer and the editor of *NC* for their comments which helped to improve earlier drafts of this article.

[35] Roest, *Essai*, p. 10.

[36] Van der Chijs, *Gelderland*, p. 245.

[37] Berghaus, 'Die Perioden des Sterlings', p. 45. Also see Cook, 'Foreign coins'.

[38] J. Linssen, 'De stichting van de stad Roermond en haar eerste opkomst', *Publications de la Société Historique et Archéologique dans le Limbourg* 62 (1976), pp. 1–133 at p. 93.

[39] R.A.D. Renting, *Regestenlijst van de schepenkist-oorkonden uit het rechterlijk archief van Arnhem* (The Hague, 1952). Interestingly, document 146 dated 11 July 1316 mentions marks of 'old Brabants', whereas document 151a of 13 September of the same year mentions both marks of 'oud Brabants' and 'Brabantsen'. Document 116 dated 10 June 1313, and document 115 dated 7 June 1313, only mention 'Brabantse', which suggests that between 1313 and 1316 a new issue of Brabants had been introduced.